

- Guidelines, for regulating the method of operation of aquatic quarantine for the import of L. Vannamei into India have been notified under Livestock Importation Act, 2001.
- An aquatic quarantine facility has been set up in Chennai exclusively for the imported SPF brood stock of L. Vannamei.
- Awareness programmes are carried out to sensitize the farmers on the need for bio-security requirements and on good management practices.

Impoverished condition of agriculturists

3086. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) while globalization and economic liberalization have enabled a better life style for a section of population, why a large segment especially in rural areas mainly agriculturists have been impoverished;

(b) the special efforts made in the wake of such a situation; and

(c) despite the land mark effect of Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) the economic impact on rural India is still not substantial and marked and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) A positive off shoot of liberalization has been that more industries to cater to the need of agriculture sector as well have come up-leading to better competition and availability of inputs. However, a major problem confronting the rural areas in general and farm households in particular is the lack of employment opportunities. The agriculture sector in India has long been characterized by underemployment. Therefore, the Government is making efforts to increase job opportunities in the farm sector through increased investment in irrigation, watershed development, wasteland development, land reclamation, etc. Quite a few new programmes like the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, Sixty Thousand Pulses and Oilseeds Villages, National Project on Soil Health and Fertility, Eastern India Initiative have been launched during the Eleventh Five Year Plan. In addition, there is greater focus on the accelerated development of the rural non-farm sector and development of clusters around towns/market centres. A growing farm sector, better rural infrastructure and connectivity, skill development, adequate power supply and easy availability of credit would help in the creation of more employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector and, in turn, enhance the income of farm households.

The basic objective of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (NREGA) is to enhance the livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. During 2009-10 (provisionally upto

March, 2010), Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has been able to provide employment to 5.06 crore households, generating 262.90 persondays of employment. Total expenditure was Rs. 34969.04 crore out of which Rs. 23643.30 crore was spent on wages. The implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act with effect from 02.02.2006 has resulted in increase in employment opportunities and wage rates in rural areas; income and purchasing power of rural households; activation of Panchayati Raj Institutions and women empowerment.

Deep sea fishing

3087. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has held any meetings with stake-holders in the deep sea fishery sector in last three months;
- (b) if so, the outcome of such talks;
- (c) whether any steps are proposed to set up coordination centres to ensure implementation of decision of empowered committee meetings;
- (d) whether offices will be set up in Chennai, Mumbai and Vishakhapatnam to be directly available; and
- (e) the steps proposed for a pro-active policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) During last three months, the Government has organized consultative meetings with the stakeholders to hear their views and to discuss various provisions of the 'Draft Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Act'.

(b) The views and feedback obtained from the stakeholders have been compiled for appropriate consideration.

(c) The decisions of the Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee on marine Fisheries (EC) are regularly reviewed in the subsequent meetings of the EC.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The policy formulation is an ongoing and continuous process. The Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee on Marine Fisheries (EC) regularly deliberates on important issues relating to marine fishery including policy matters.

Duty free import of milk powder

3088. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is proposed to allow duty free import of 30,000 tonnes of milk powder; and
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.